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E U C H A R I S.

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# E U C H A R I S

A Poem

BY

F. REGINALD STATHAM

(FRANCIS REYNOLDS)

*Author of*

'ALICE RUSHTON AND OTHER POEMS' 'GLAPHYRA AND OTHER POEMS'

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1871





## DEDICATION.

---

*Even to thee, who, not in faith less strong  
Than her whose suffering endeth with my tale,  
Hast not been tempted to forego the veil  
Which is our pure love's sanction to the throng,—*

*Even to thee, with whom this isle of song,—  
This isle of rest from many a former gale,  
Of rest ere once more westward strives our sail,—  
Hath been the shore of which I dreamed so long ;—*

*O unto thee, thou pearl of price unknown  
By all save Him whose is the infinite sea  
In depths of which thy perfectness hath grown,  
This sonnet comes ambassador from me ;  
And asks thy grace to call that work thine own  
Whose every virtue lives enlarged in thee.*



## P R E F A C E.



REPRESENTATIONS have been made to the author that his present Poem is open to grave misconstructions, which nothing but an explanatory preface can guard against. Much against his inclination, therefore, (having in view the impropriety of seeming to criticise his own work,) he inserts these few lines to say that, whatever object he may have had in view, he certainly did not write this Poem with the idea of advocating indiscriminate abolition of all forms of marriage. He hopes, moreover, that as the Poem is entirely dramatic its catastrophe will be accepted as sufficient evidence of his freedom from such an intention.



# EUCCHARIS

# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LETTERS

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## LETTER I.

### *LEONARD TO STEPHEN.*

From a country town : Oct. 24. 18-1.

‘Two Neapolitans ’scaped’—to wit, myself  
And Johnnie Hirst;—maybe you ask from what?  
O Stephano! from that most dreary scene,  
Whether most drear in being countified  
Or countrified, I cannot clearly say;  
Each word involves a horror—countified,  
The synonym for stupid; countrified,  
For some unwritten adjective that tells  
Of dancing fit to make Terpsichore  
Tie up her feet for ever, in disgust,  
In cocoa-matting;—this have we escaped,—  
The noun that lends to these twain adjectives  
The utmost gloom of darkness,—ev’n a ball.

For to be countified—(I coin a verb  
To match my adjective)—is not at times  
The worst of evils ; there are hounds or guns  
For those who like them ; likewise dinners, wines,  
That shine, for those whose souls mahoganise  
Their theologic system, with a light  
Of other years, with promise of content,  
And carelessness of walks at minor hours.  
Nor to be countrified, in spite of that  
Which Touchstone taught, in summer time at least,  
Is equal to damnation ; I recall  
Visions of groves and meadows, close-cut lawns  
Bruised with the treadings of small-booted feet,  
Where laughter mingles with the ceaseless click  
Of balls and mallets, where the ruling voice  
Of village parson oftentimes is heard  
Repressing vice with thrice the promptitude  
Of Sabbatarian usage ;—these are things  
That make the states expressed by either verb  
At times endurable, or even more.



But join the two in adjectival form,  
And wreathe them, on a wet October night,  
Around the noun I will not write again,  
And horror stands completed ! We have 'scaped,  
'Scaped or survived, and hope are duly thankful  
For this the least of mercies. Know you not  
How, when some casual hospitable friend  
Invokes you with a dinner, how you sit  
And watch his flasks of logwood circling round,  
Content to sip, and sip, and fill again,  
Saved in the hope of coffee ? Even so  
Now sip I, out of very thankfulness  
For good intention (scarce enough sometimes)  
A scanty drop of last night's memories ;  
As for the rest, I leave them unto those  
By whom such things are prized and coveted.

Yet not to be ungrateful, though the thing  
Which gave me pleasure was not reckoned in  
Among the many promised,—not to be

Too cynical, I may confess to you  
That there was something which (it seems so  
now)  
Was worth the reaching through the dreary pomp,  
The dull quintessence of stupidity  
Which has its birth, like Milton's melancholy,  
In Stygian caves—none more forlorn than that  
Which held us overnight. And this perhaps  
(I say 'perhaps' in view of future chances)  
It was that made me more susceptible  
To any smile that seemed l'Allegro's own ;  
For know, I make a friend. 'Oh, rare !' you  
cry ;  
' What was he like ? Arabian looker-down  
' On women, creatures guiltless of a soul !  
' Cobbler, or Jehu of a country fly,  
' Whose faith in coming Demos raises him  
' Above the awls or ribbons of his craft ?'  
No, I confess, a woman ; one, besides,  
Not old, nor blue, nor differing from myself

In social rank (whatever that may be);  
And one, moreover, not devoid of that  
Which is with most their only claim for worship ;  
For though no feature of her face would reach  
Your standard of perfection, yet I thought  
Her head and shape were perfect—statuesque.  
No full-blown beauty of your Titian school,—  
Titian, the master of the long smooth curve,  
The fully veined, but nerveless, skin that speaks  
A meagre share of soul, and oftentimes  
A share by no means meagre of those passions  
Which may sleep harmlessly, and not break out  
In such refined adulteries as made  
Venetian pomp foretell Venetia's fall.  
(You laugh, I know ; but I must have my fling.)  
But for my statue—has she got a name ?  
Her name is Johnstone,—Eucharis, I think,  
I heard them call her ; surely you must know,  
As one that moves in almost every sphere,  
Her mother's name—the selfsame Johnstone who

Is famed for tales of little girls and boys  
Who all die out because they only feed  
On weak green tea and Bible ;—she herself,  
As often chances in this evil world,  
Is better than her books ; serene and kind,  
A fine old lady ; loving all the more  
Her quiet now, in contrast with the time  
When she was tortured daily, ere the scamp  
Whom the world called her husband ran away.  
'Two children has she, daughters ; one just wed  
Unto a country bank ; for even you,  
With all your charity, could not describe  
As man the thing that owns her, nor does she ;  
Although she snubs her mother on the strength  
Of her dominion o'er his bunch of keys.  
So much for two ; and what about the third ?  
Something about her struck me ; she appeared  
To bear about her traces of an air  
More cosmopolitan than that she breathed.  
I claimed her early (for a waltz, I think) ;

And when we paused, and that was soon enough,  
She asked me, rather bluntly, what I thought—  
Not seemed to think, but really thought, she said —  
Of dancing as a midnight exercise  
For creatures blessed with souls as well as brains?  
I gave a start, half-dreading, in my haste,  
A Calvinistic sermon, which to me  
Is certain dissolution ; this she saw,  
And eagerly disclaimed a thought so rash.  
I told her then my fancy, which you know.  
She looked half-pleased. ‘ And as for you ? ’ I said.  
‘ And as for me, I hate it,’ she replied,  
With such a smile, and such a looking-up,  
And such emphatic motion of her heel,  
I could not doubt her truth. We danced no more,  
Nor did she through the evening, I suspect,  
Attracting thus the more than muttered wrath  
Of her stern sister, now incorporate  
With safes and oaken desks, and greasy shreds  
Of printed rag, entitled country notes.

(I have one by me, meaning it to pass,  
An heirloom, to my dim posterity.)

And so I made a friend. ‘This all?’ you ask;  
O man, how long shall words be spent in vain  
To teach thee how that not alone by speech,  
That not alone in cards and morning calls,  
Doth live the thing called friendship! Impious  
wretch,

To use that word, that sin-suggester—‘all!’  
Perhaps you did not; so my vials yet  
Shall keep their corks in and their capsules on  
Until I feel more certain. But withal  
Prepare me now a lodging; which implies  
Due warning unto her I may not name,  
Much less address by letter, in the dread  
Of misconstruction such as waited on  
The notes of Mr. Pickwick, that my mind  
Turns townward now, and that my body comes  
On Tuesday, by the midday train from here.

## LETTER II.

*GERTRUDE TO A FRIEND.*

From a country town : Jan. 3, 18-2.

A THOUSAND thanks, dear, for your tiny note ;  
The number that you send, I well believe,  
Is the true reason for its brevity.  
But do not think of that ; a word from you  
Is always welcome, and my husband, too,  
(I grow familiar with my dignity),  
Was pleased for me to get it. When you feel  
At liberty to see us (this from him),  
Nothing will please him better than to make  
Your family's acquaintance ; as for me,  
I know that I am always dear to you,  
And so refrain from suchlike messages.  
But what ! I overlook the star and gem

Of your epistle! Really is it true  
That Julia is immutably engaged,  
And to a coronet? at least to what  
May some day be one? Quite I understand  
Your father's feeling; after such a life  
Of tearing up and down, of casting off  
And putting on, I think if she should now  
Do aught again to mar her prospects, he  
Might well be vexed. But then I know she won't,  
And therefore think your father might have spared  
His somewhat coarse expression. Give her, dear,  
My very kindest love; you know at school  
We always called her countess.

As for me—

(That phrase is quite an heirloom in our house;  
Mamma is always using it)—for me,—  
Why, yes, I flourish. Yesterday we had  
What we called quite a gathering, what you  
Would sneer at as an unsuccessful squeeze.  
But, seriously, we did most passably;



Our rooms are large—indeed, our house is one  
Built by the present Member to contain  
Whole shoals of hungry voters; but the town  
Grows Liberal ; at last election-time  
His head was nearly broken; so he deems  
His pearls too precious to be spent on swine,  
And lets his house, and lives ten miles away.  
Well, as I said, we did most passably;  
I think 'twas sixty-three or sixty-four  
We numbered ; all went smoothly, save for one  
Unfortunate annoyance which I had  
To bear with from my sister Eucharis.

To make you understand it, you must know  
That long before I married she had grown  
From oddness to a singularity  
Which, looking at its present consequence,  
I cannot think, poor child, bespeaks in her  
A mind at all times sound. Three years ago,  
You know she had (or, if you do not know,

I tell you now) a disappointment, which,  
'Though all of us, and she herself, indeed,  
Regarded as most fortunate, may yet  
Have caused her more excitement than she thinks ;  
She always was excitable. Well, now,  
Since last November, she has been engaged—  
(O heavens ! what a word ! I grow quite faint  
To think what wrath would centre on my head  
If she but knew I used it !)—no, my dear,  
She's not engaged—she's married, so she says ;  
I never thought that spiritual wives  
Would cross the Atlantic eastward ; but if you  
Heard half the awful nonsense that she talks  
(I call it awful, for at times, in truth,  
It waxes irreligious—even worse),  
You would not think her sane. I gave mamma  
My mind about it ; but I grow quite sick  
Of being told I cannot understand,  
That Eucharis is different (so she is ;  
'Thank heav'n for that !) from other womenkind.

Mamma quite takes her side ; I hope and trust  
She may not live to see some evil grow  
Out of this freedom. Not that she is free  
In manner—quite the opposite ; I think  
That man would come but very poorly off  
Who dared a liberty with her ; but then  
Her speech to those, myself to wit, who strive  
To mend her oddities, is really shocking.  
She asked me, just for instance, this day week,  
If I imagined I was truly wed ;  
And what my thoughts would be, if, in the day  
Of Judgment, I should find myself arraigned  
Amid a host of women of bad life,  
Who sell themselves for money. I was vexed  
Almost to quarrelling with her ; but, in truth,  
At times I think her not responsible  
For what she says ; and she is still, besides,  
So deeply grieved at heart, if she suspects  
Her words have hurt me.

Well, she is engaged,  
Or rather married, to a gentleman  
She met ten weeks ago, one rainy night  
We dragged her, much resisting, to the ball  
We call the hunt ball ;—(Oh, she thanks me now  
For dragging her !) a Mr. Arlington,  
Who came down here for some mysterious cause  
(For no one knew him), met her at the ball,  
Got introduced, and then, instead of going  
About his proper business back to town,  
Hung about here and preyed on Eucharis.  
You must not laugh, but, seriously, I think,  
From what she tells me, she was first impressed  
By his dislike to dancing,—a dislike  
Which is but one among her oddities.  
He is a gentleman, and well connected,  
And has some money, tho' not much ; he paints,  
And might, I hear, be famous, if he chose  
To act like other mortals ; but he holds  
All gain of money as detestable,

And really has been rude in his remarks  
About the Bank. Well, here the lovers are,  
Roaming together all the country round ;  
My maid, who comes from Thornton, saw them once  
Parading through a wood three miles from home,  
And not an hour of daylight, if you please !  
A nice example to the country-folk !  
And everything in keeping. (O dear me,  
I hear the dressing bell !—My dear, attend  
To this injunction ; if you come to wed  
Never be late for dinner ! I must haste  
And finish up the story of my wrongs.)  
Last night she came, and he came, and mamma,—  
Came late and went quite early ; well enough  
For poor mamma,—but what do you think of this ?  
Nor he nor she would dance a single step !  
And even hinted that they only came  
Because mamma must come ; she sat and talked  
With old Miss Pringle, whom we just endure  
By reason of her interest in the Bank ;

And as for him, he got engaged in talk  
(Or ‘ married ’ I suppose ! ) with Mr. Hook,  
Our last new doctor,—(quite a clever man,  
I hear, especially in certain things  
Which have no interest for a girl like you ;)   
And kept him idle, much to my chagrin,  
For the said doctor dances charmingly.  
Was it not all too bad? My husband says  
He must not come again, nor Eucharis,  
To make him look a fool.

And now good bye ;

O what a letter ! How will you survive  
The reading of it ?

## LETTER III.

*LEONARD TO EUCHARIS.*

From London: Jan. 28, 18-2.

THANKS for your last, more dear to me than ever.

This is the answer to your searching out

Of what love means, in spirit and in truth,—

Nearness and openness ; if ever time

Should come when we are wedded, to the world,

Perchance I then could find some other word

Which you would then more clearly understand.

Till then, if ever we should come indeed

To add the outward to the inward troth,

This word, I mean the second, will suffice.

You doubt my definition? Lest you should,

And I not by to comment thereupon,

Let me by letter labour to explain.  
A labour, truly, in the scanty space  
Afforded by a letter, to express  
My meaning clearly ; it will help, I think,  
To lay down first some postulates,—some signs  
Which have to us a like significance ;  
(For all disputings which the world has seen  
Spring from this chiefly,—want of one consent  
As to the meaning of some common phrase.)  
What then is true to us ? (It matters not,  
When thus between ourselves, how truth appears  
To others.) We discern two separate states ;  
Not separate by Time, for ever both  
Are co-existent ; one invisible  
Which we have labelled spiritual, and one  
Material, which is servant to the first,  
And only has existence while the first  
Exists to comprehend it, ever changed  
To match the constant progress of the soul.  
(You will recall our earlier conversations



Which touched on this.) The one the dwelling-  
place

Of Infinite Principle, which men call God ;  
The other filled with facts, the best of which  
Are men themselves ; yet is each separate fact  
Still instinct with some share of Principle ;  
Whether in lower orders matters not  
This moment to discuss, but certainly,  
And consciously, would men but hold it so,  
With men ; who in an image have been taught  
To call themselves the sons of Principle,—  
Children of God, and therefore heirs of all  
Which is Eternal, Infinite, and True.  
Men truly are so ; yet they undergo,  
While in the visible state, a slavery,  
Or what would be so, to material claims ;  
And hence come words that shadow forth degrees  
Of less or greater bondage,—virtue, love,  
Sin, faith, hope, honour, mercy, and the like ;  
Only of these is love the constant chief,

Because 'tis positive,—a thing to do,—  
And not mere school-boy shunning of reproof;—  
Because all else lives in it ; wherefore some  
Have said that God is love, not meaning thus  
To limit and confine Him, but to show  
That love is aye the surest path to climb  
To nearness and to likeness. Here, you see,  
My proof comes round again ; nearness to God  
Is love, and therefore, men being sons of God,  
Nearness of soul is that which among men  
Results in all those sweet performances  
Which chiefly keep forgetfulness of God  
From laying waste all corners of the earth.  
And openness comes after; are we not,  
O Eucharis, ourselves the living proof  
Of this great consequence? Could I have dared  
To ask your love, to ask to be near you,  
And not revealed all those abiding marks  
Of bondage to some gross material thing  
Which I must bear about me? Might not else

Your love have centred, not on me, with all  
My stains and imperfections, but on that  
I seemed to be? upon some abstract good  
Which still, indeed, would stand, altho' I fell  
Beneath it, yet whose shadowy life was not  
The life you thought to make companion of  
And walk beside for ever? Nearness, then,  
Is love itself, and openness is that  
Which only makes love possible to men;  
And as the more a soul is capable  
Of perfect love, so will it see the need  
Of perfect openness, and will not fear,  
Nay, will rejoice, to keep it, gaining thus  
A rock foundation which no floods of chance  
Can ever shake, or fortune take away.

So much for this, and now to something else.  
Were I of those who talk of Providence  
When aught has happened nicely to their minds,  
I should most certainly have called that so,

Whate'er it was, which led you to discourse  
Upon the disproportion which exists  
Between a form and what it signifies ;—  
I should have called it Providence, I say,  
Because my wish has for a long time been  
To open this discussion, yet I found  
No means to do so ; for my conscience said  
That for the end to which I wished it so  
The first approach must some way come from you ;  
Else I might charge myself, perhaps with truth,  
With having overborne your feebler will.  
Now it has come, the opportunity ;  
Yet let me say, before I pass to that  
Which is the thought now upmost in my mind,  
That it is nothing singular to find  
The selfsame form embodying ideas  
More distant from each other than the light  
From darkness. Here is nothing singular,  
Or without parallel ; material forms  
Are of necessity, thro' being so,

Subject to limitation ; in ten crimes  
That seem alike in outward circumstance  
You will not find for two the selfsame cause ;  
And so with customs. Where comes in reform  
But through the door of some rebellious mind  
That feels itself unharmonied with that  
Which others take and suffer? ‘Not for me,’  
Saith such a mind, taught by the light of God,  
‘Are these worn garments, for they fit me not,  
‘And I am more than they ; let me be free,  
‘Wrongly or rightly,—rightly, as I trust,—  
‘To fit my growth with others.’ Off the old  
And on the new ! They may be coats of skins,  
Yet these he would have rather, for in truth  
He feels that God, who tutored him thus far,  
Would soonest have him naked, if himself  
Could bear the sharp ungraduated change.  
So off the old, while all his fellows shriek,  
Or rend their clothes, cast dust into the air,  
Or in some other well-accustomed way

Proclaim his faith and their unfaithfulness.  
But time proves all things; proves the scoffer  
    right,  
And that finality is not of God,  
But of the dread materializing fiend  
Which is God's enemy, and seeks men's souls.

Now to these forms. O Eucharis, you know  
That if in aught my purposes are pure,—  
Pure in the sense of being undefiled  
With meaner motives which hypocrisy  
Slurs over and conceals,—they are most pure  
In reference to you; and this it is,—  
My knowledge that your estimate of me  
Will shield me from the pain of misconstruction,—  
That prompts me now to answer from my heart.  
You doubt, you say, if that can ever be  
A marriage in God's sight which pretermits  
All but the outward form. Conversely, I  
Put to you this,—what sin is there to those

Who pretermitt the form and keep the rest?  
The question is but abstract; we have not  
As yet discerned necessity for us  
To blend our outward histories into one;  
Yet would I have you well consider it,  
For sake of all the sifting of old truths,  
Or what men call so, which you gain thereby;  
I leave it to you, adding nothing more.

Adding no more, I said; but I have read  
My letter thro' since then, and something more  
I find suggested, which I fain would add.  
No sin in such a marriage of consent?  
What if there be much virtue? What if those  
Who, through their faith in God and in themselves,  
Casting the world's praise far behind their backs,  
Have made their love their church, and God their  
priest,  
Should in the future hear it said to them  
'Well done, good servants,' by that voice of years

Which is the voice of Him who sits to judge?  
What if they read the primal blessing thus,—  
‘ If God hath joined us, blasphemy it were  
‘ For men to separate us by their law  
‘ Which boasts its proud necessity to those  
‘ Who would be one in flesh as well as heart—  
‘ In flesh, the lesser thing, as now in heart,  
‘ The greater ?’ What if they should read it thus  
And find themselves enthroned to farthest Time  
Among the greatest of God’s messengers ?

I leave you with the thought ; you understand  
It is but abstract.



## LETTER IV.

*EUCCHARIS TO HER MOTHER.*

May 15, 18-2.

O dearest mother, dearer to me now  
Than ever, in the sad discovery  
That what I do for duty must include  
A semblance of the undutiful to you,—  
How must I tell you what a venturous start  
My life will have accomplished by the time  
That your dear eyes are weeping over this?  
For weep you will, dear mother ; not for long,  
I feel most certain, over what is left  
Undone by us in scorn of all the world ;  
But what is done will so much open out  
Your visions of the true reality  
That you will weep, as even I do now,

To think of it ; to think what blessed hope  
The world might reach its hands to, could it trust  
The voice that saith, ‘ I will be with thee when  
‘ Thou comest to deep waters ; ’ deep, like these,  
That from earth’s labouring centre issue forth  
To try all faiths, and all who honour them.  
O you will weep, as I do even now,  
To think how few are saved, how many drown,  
For lack of faith to reach their hands to that  
Which is our earnest of the coming time,—  
The ark of our deliverance, into which  
God shuts us, that a remnant may be left  
To rule his new creations. Not to us  
The glory or the honour ; not to us,  
Who have through faith been made the ministers  
Of that new covenant which now begins  
To dawn above the darkness of the old ;—  
O not to us, but unto Him whose love  
Is now the sea we twain have ventured on,  
To seek an unknown kingdom, which doth lie,

We know, beyond all distance ever reached  
By any keel which hath returned again.

We twain, my mother ; you at least have known  
With what a glory of still lengthening days  
The lengthening nights of winter saw me crowned ;  
You will recall the joy you did not hide  
To see me, like a ship that long has swung  
At idle anchor, swayed by every tide,  
And at the last with daybreak spreads her sails  
That bear her forwards, full of light and wind,  
Upon some holy quest;—to see me thus  
Loosed from my idleness, and borne away  
To better things than I had touched before,  
Which, now I know, my soul had waited for,  
And found in that bright morning; this you know,  
And this you will remember; wherefore now  
It seems less hard to make you understand,  
Having a language which we both can speak,  
What else must follow.

Mother, by the time  
You weep for joy to learn that so it is,  
I shall no more be merely bride in heart ;  
(I use the world's word 'merely,' for to us  
The world itself is merely,)—I shall not  
Be any more the maiden you have seen  
Grow up from childhood; O, a richer life,—  
For that must needs be richer which doth bring  
More chance of pain, more certainty of joy,—  
Will then have clothed me ; I shall have put off  
The robe your hands have laboured, not in vain,  
To keep all pure and holy, and put on  
A garment God hath dipped in His own light,  
And coloured thus with hues I see not yet,  
But know will satisfy me in the time  
When I shall learn to rightly name them all.  
I shall be wed, my mother ; wherefore, then,  
I hear you ask me, with such secrecy,  
And not as others, in the face of all ?  
O mother, tell me;—did your senses hear,

Or any sense, the song which rang through  
heaven—

A sweeter song than that which celebrates  
A sinner's penitence—when our two souls  
Knelt down together in our Father's house,  
To which his call had brought us, and received  
His infinite sanction? Did He not require  
And charge us both, as we would not be shamed  
In our own day of judgment, to confess  
If there were any just impediment  
To keep our souls asunder? Did He not  
Then join our hands, and call us only one?  
O mother, you did hear it ! for I saw,  
When oft you looked at us, your eyes all filled  
With tears which are the outward witnesses  
Of the soul's recent sojourn, on its day  
Of rest, among the glories of that world  
In which our love is known, and looked upon  
As something to assure us, when we come  
To enter it more fully, of a right

To stand far nearer to the central Throne  
Than many whom this world has glorified  
With sainted names and crowns of martyrdom.  
You heard that song, and therefore you will hear  
With less misgiving than would all beside,  
That in the strength of this our inward troth  
We have discarded all external form,  
Which may be useful for the world that is,  
But which to us, who grasp the world to come,  
Were but a mockery and base denial  
Of what we know, and what we have confessed  
To be the sole foundation of our love.

This, then, explains our secrecy. I fain  
Had told you of our marriage ere it came  
To be a thing not spoken of, but done;  
But feared lest in that strained perplexity  
Which just as often comes before an act  
As after action it is smoothed away,  
Some pain which was not needed might be brought

To you, to Gertrude, most of all to him  
Whom I must guard from self-accusing thoughts  
By strong persistence; which persistence might  
Have seemed to you undutiful, while yet  
I had not proved, by adding deed to thought,  
My faith which now will strengthen you to bear  
Attacks of doubt, or whispers from the world.  
Not that I fear the latter ; for your sake  
We have proclaimed our marriage openly  
As if it were but one among the crowd  
Of so-called marriages, which are, in truth,  
Mere mockeries of the ordinance of God ;  
Mere mockeries, in that so constantly  
They serve to cover greed of rank by men  
Or wealth by women,—wealth for which they sell  
Their souls and bodies, doubling the disgrace  
That follows women whom the world agrees  
To hold condemned. This, mother, have we done  
Against my first intention ; yet the thought  
That you thereby may certainly be saved

Some pain for me, who rather, as you know,  
For you would suffer torments, makes me less  
Opposed to what would else appear an act  
Of faithlessness, that could not fail to bring  
An overwhelming vengeance.

I am not  
In mood to write much further ; we shall go,  
Sped by your blessing, mother, to the south  
Of Europe, (where, I know not yet,) and thence  
Onward to Rome ; but you shall hear in time.  
I feel your blessing round me ; if your doubt  
At times should lead you faintly to despond,  
Read then this letter,—think what I have been,—  
Your own loved daughter, pure in God's own sight,  
And seeking still to purify myself  
By that communion which the soul alone  
That much has tried it, estimates aright.

Kiss Gertrude for me, mother,—tell her all ;  
I know that she will trust her Eucharis.



## LETTER V.

*EUCCHARIS TO GERTRUDE.*

San Remo : Oct. 2, 18-2.

SHAME, say you, sister, shame? O would that I  
 Felt half the shame for what you glory in  
 As you for my transgression ! Yet not this  
 Shall now possess me ; I would fain be kind  
 Even to you, who, most unwittingly,  
 (For are you not my sister?) have been doomed  
 To wound me deeper than all blame could wound  
 From other lips. 'Tis not the name you give  
 To my adventure,—let me call it so,—  
 For I was well forewarned that all the world  
 Would thus regard it wrongly,—no, not this ;  
 But these imputed motives !—Tell me now  
 What in the old times have you seen in me,—

What waywardness, what blank indifference  
To that external garment of reserve—  
Reserve of self, in speech or company—  
Which is the woman's index of a pure  
And womanly soul within? O, tell me, what !—  
That I may know if I have fallen prey  
To things beneath myself, and not been raised  
By cords of faith and love scarce paralleled  
To things above!—I search my life and see  
No cause for condemnation. Judge me then  
Not as an enemy ; ah ! had it been  
An open foe who thus dishonoured me,  
Would I not straight have hid me from his sight  
Within my robe of conscious innocence,  
And so passed by? But when from you, from  
you,—  
My own loved sister, my familiar friend,  
Who, if she failed at times to understand,  
As we grew older, every thought of mine,  
Yet ever loved and soothed me,—when from you  
Come such sharp arrows, what defence remains

For me against their poison? Seems it not  
As if myself were turned against myself?  
As if my conscience wore two masks, and spoke  
Now in approval, now in words that shake  
My life to its foundation? 'Twas not so,  
Or would not have been so, I dare to think,  
Two years ago ; I mean not to deplore  
Your changed estate, but there are duties which  
With it you entered on, that tend to mould  
Their servant to themselves ;—all duties do so,  
I say with thankfulness, whose duty seems  
A light to climb to, not a path to tread.

Why need I more? Write soon to me, and say  
You are my sister, trusting in me still,  
And still content to trust, not understand.  
Give me yourself, and tell me how you fare ;  
Is it not soon that you are counting on  
A possible successor to the Bank?  
When you put off your acting, I myself  
May have some news to tell you.

## LETTER VI.

*LEONARD TO STEPHEN.*

San Remo : Oct. 12, 18-2.

THANKS for the books, but more especially  
 The parchments ; as concerning all the cloaks  
 And other garments, you may make of them  
 A general distribution. Were I Paul,  
 Or were the children of this latter age  
 As ready to be cured of soul-disease  
 As were their fathers of infirmities  
 Pertaining to the body, I might then  
 Expect to work unnumbered miracles  
 To those who touch my garments ; I might see  
 A cabman cured of lying for the sake  
 Of one more sixpence ; I might see the waiter  
 At that famed house whereto you most resort

Moved by the bonds of human fellowship,  
And nothing more material, to reserve  
For your especial benefit the cut  
You most delight in ; I might even see  
A sweeper sweep the crossing for a peer  
And spurn the pence of aristocracy.  
I might see greater wonders ; but, alas !  
The wicked will do wickedly ; I fear  
Not in my time will the restorer come  
Who shall uncripple all inheritors  
Of old diseases, whether priests or peers,  
And send them forth into the multitude  
Leaping, and walking, and praising something else  
Besides themselves.

Now will I even sing  
Unto my well-belovèd, not a song  
Touching his vineyard ; that were also well  
In proper season, for I know how much  
The fruit of vineyards moveth him to joy ;  
But sing, or rather preach a short discourse

Upon a text he loveth to propound.  
Saith not that man of men, the great adored,  
Whose praise is in all churches, saith he not,—  
‘ Whoso lacks art and science, let him have  
‘ Religion ; whoso hath them wanteth not  
‘ Religion ? ’ Infinite, my Christian friends,  
In number are the facts which illustrate  
This glorious truth ;—who here but has not had,  
At some time in his life, experiences  
Which may confirm it ? Thus the man who seeks  
The gilded halls of pleasure sees engraved  
Upon their walls the sentence, ‘ He who lacks  
‘ Money or title, let him well take heed  
‘ That he has manners ; those who have them both,  
‘ Or either, want not manners.’—(I have lost  
My shorthand notes, and so forbear the rest.)  
But to be serious ; I will grant it true  
· What Goëthe says, and frame upon that text  
An answer to your doubts ; first thanking you  
For your acceptance of my good intentions.

I will not here discuss the positive ;  
That side is rather for myself and her  
Whom I watch daily, in whose face as yet  
I see no trace of turning back again  
From what, with her own will, she ventured on.  
The negative is rather what to you  
Will be most interesting, as indeed  
Your doubts all turn upon it.

Firstly, then,

(I cannot put the sermon from my pen ;  
It must have written sermons at some time ;)   
I grant the truth of Goëthe's axiom  
By taking Art to signify the path  
To God's infinity, and Science that  
To God's minuteness, which in very truth  
Is also infinite ; I grant it true  
In this respect, as linked with principles,  
And not, as some would have it, linked with facts,—  
A daub on canvas, or a pin-spiked fly ;  
In this respect, as linked with principles,

'Tis true indeed, and so magnificent  
As to deserve the name of revelation.  
Now let me trace my second parallel ;  
' He who has love and honour wanteth not  
' A form of marriage ; he who lacketh them  
' Let him have form,'—to bind him, who would else  
But treat his wife as if she were a whore,  
His children as the great unfathered throng  
Who crowd our workhouses and lawless streets.  
Let me be plain ; there is not any man  
Who has not love and honour in some sort ;  
Though oft 'tis difficult to see wherein  
That love is raised above a brute's desire,  
Or honour raised above the brute's revenge  
On those who think to share his property.  
There is not any man devoid of both ;  
But let us journey upward in the scale ;  
And let us come to those with whom their love  
Is not the daub on canvas, not the fact  
Which oft results, though not invariably,



From their desire to draw more near to God,  
Through nearness to each other ;—nearness which  
Is very love, the entrance whereunto  
Is nakedness—is free acknowledgment  
Of all high thoughts, of all corrupting stains  
Which inmost conscience, like the eye of God,  
Beholds, and oftentimes uses as a thorn  
To prick the spirit from its sluggishness.  
And this is what we strive for, this is what  
We two have found and fain would show the  
world,—

The union of two spirits, which includes  
Material union, and alone has power  
To lift the latter from that foul abyss  
Of animal passions which whole hosts of men  
Think, vainly, they escape from, when they turn  
To settle down, as well they call the state  
Which is to them the exhausted settling down  
Of sand but lately drifted in the whirl  
Of fierce cross-currents. Thus we would define

Our love, and honour rises in the scale  
With love's ascension ; all minutest forms  
Of speech, or act, or thought, are parts of that  
Which is to love in some ways as to art  
Is science ; dealing rather with the fact  
Than with the principle, but through the fact  
Still working to the principle, as love  
Through principle necessitates the fact.  
All this is true, I hear you say ; but then  
What need to run so counter to the world,  
When to yourselves the union you desire  
Exists in spite of social formalists ?  
What need ? why, every need ! Remember this,—  
History will teach you if my words do not,—  
That action only is the lever which  
Has power to move the world ; had Cæsar fallen  
If envy had been peevishly content  
To speak of daggers ? Had the Tudor race  
Been blessed in its declining, had not he  
Who gave it all its greatness, first been cursed

For setting up his individual will  
Against all custom and established law ?  
Had Hampden been a hero, Washington,  
Or scores beside, if thoughts that burned in them  
Had found no outlet but in wordy smoke,  
And not burst forth into that cleansing fire  
In which new systems needs must be baptised?  
These, you may say, worked for the public weal—  
Worked for the world ; but such an act as ours  
Has no such plea. O misbelieving dog !  
Answer me this ;—in days when you were young, —  
An age ago,—would you have rather run  
The risk of showing up some rainy morn  
Before a magistrate, for blows bestowed  
On guardians of the peace, or—(be advised !)  
Or walked on Sunday in a wide-awake  
Unto some fane (you best know which they are,)   
Wherein sweet Fashion loveth to confess  
Its week-day sins ? Your hesitation proves  
The truth I plead for,—that the social yoke

Is stronger than the legal ; that to break  
This yoke is just as excellent an act,  
And necessary for the world's advance,  
As any just rebellion against force  
Which weaves more tangible, therefore weaker,  
chains.

I speak half-joking ; yet I would you knew  
How seriously this matter weighs with me ;  
How certainly we both regard ourselves  
As pioneers of greater liberty,  
And therefore, by God's law, of greater love.

This is a postscript ; postscripts, so they say,  
Contain the pith of letters ; judge if mine  
Does so or not. My wife, ten days ago,  
Wrote to her married sister, answering  
A letter which might well be summarised  
In these two words,—‘ For shame ! ’ It wounded  
her  
Most deeply, yet she wrote most kindly back ;

I saw the letter. Well, to-day there comes  
A line again in answer ; ‘ Much she grieves,’  
Saith this pure sister who has sold herself  
For money to a monkey, ‘ Much she grieves  
‘ To say that till her sister has evinced,  
‘ By marrying the man she calls her husband,  
‘ Some sense of what is decent, she must cease  
‘ To correspond with her.’ This is not hers ;  
It is the banker’s. Tell me now, you sage,  
Whose brain is full of projects of reform,  
What means can be suggested to root out  
This moral syphilis,—the love of gold,  
Or gain, or fear of some material loss,  
That poisons man’s existence? I would fain  
The whole world were a Corinth, could the taint  
Of body be accepted as the price  
For purging out the fouler leprosy  
Of self-advantage. Trade, religion, art,—  
It matters not ; all are alike infected ;  
O for a deluge !

## LETTER VII.

*MRS. JOHNSTONE TO A FRIEND.*

Thornton Grange : Oct. 14, 18-2.

My griefs grow greater. Months ago you knew  
How Gertrude's changed affection wounded me,—  
Changed, though in truth I think she knows it  
not,

And only deems, poor child, her duty shown  
In teaching me to see more clearly mine.  
But is not Eucharis with me? Ah ! herein  
I find excuse for my long slumbering pen !  
Dear friend, I know that when you learn of all  
That held me silent, you will summon back  
The slight reproach I feel your letter breathes ;  
For I have made resolve, after much thought,  
And after many prayers, to tell you all.

One child still with me,—Gertrude,—(for the drive  
Is nothing for the state she boasts of now,)  
With me in bodily presence, though in mind  
Departed farther than my heart will bear  
To let me think ;—and one still near in soul,  
But severed from me by some thousand miles,  
And by a gulf of agonising doubt  
Too great to speak of calmly, even to you ;—  
Which is the greater torment ? You will think,  
When read my letter, that for Eucharis  
My heart should most be troubled ; yet so strange  
Reverse of feeling true misfortune works,  
That rather does my comfort flow from her ;  
Comfort, for though her error may be great—  
I cannot measure it—herself I know ;  
And after many conflicts with myself,  
And with the sternness of received ideas,  
This light, thank God ! burns clear without eclipse ;—  
That to herself she is devoid of sin ;  
That to her soul no pureness has been lost,

But rather added ; if it were not thus  
I could not even speak of her to you.

My darling's letter which you find enclosed,—  
(Pray send it back, for I am strangely filled,  
With trembling for her safety ; such a strain  
As must be daily on her cannot work  
Her outward welfare,—I may soon be left  
With little else to keep her memory clear ;)  
This strange wild letter will be spokesman for  
Much I would spare myself ; what next to say ?  
Let me suppose your questions,—has it spread ?  
(I know this one your first, for care of me  
And for the honour of my darling child.)  
Not much, I think, even here ; and even here  
Report is not so blackening as might be ;  
A civil marriage, secretly performed  
To cheat my prohibition ; this, I think,  
Includes all rumours. (For my will, God knows  
It was not wanting to her happiness.



For now to that which clearly separates  
This action of my darling, (nay, of him  
Whose name should be, in ordinary use,  
A malediction), from all common sins;  
That to themselves their union is no less  
Than actual marriage; can I think on mine  
And not be sadly tempted to confess  
The larger share of truth upon their side?  
Nor this alone, but widely to the world  
(Although, it seems, your name was overlooked.)  
They have proclaimed that union, in such terms  
As well may serve to cover scandal up,  
And hide their only error. Can it be  
That what so late was lawful on one side  
The Tweed and Cheviots, justly may be made  
Upon the other an enduring badge  
Of social outlawry? Think not, dear friend,  
That my own daughter's trespass drives me on  
To make excuse for license—to lose hold  
Of what is woman's glory and chief gift;

But think of me in this wise circumstanced ;—  
My best loved child, whose soul was alway pure,  
Purer than most, has given her fame away,  
And placed herself, so would the world declare,  
Upon the outcast's level ; am I then,  
When thus confronted with such opposite creeds,  
To hold my own, and call my child still pure,  
And by that estimation seem to fall  
Into like condemnation ; or must I  
(You know I could not!) treat her as the vile,  
And cast her from my sight for evermore?  
I have not done so ; I have written her  
More than one letter (here you must not blame)  
As to a daughter living in His sight  
To whom the purest is but as the vile ;  
As to a woman chaste in thought and will,  
But whose misguided action (for I feel  
That somewhere there is evil, though in vain  
Seems often all endeavour to describe  
Its proper limits) will not fail to bear

Some dreadful fruit of inward misery,  
And, it may well be, outward pain or death.

Think well before you answer; vex me not  
(This one request I make, and you will heed it,)  
With moaning for my sorrow ; for I stand  
So near the line where every sorrow ends  
In comprehension of the ways of God,  
That my own grief seems nothing ; rather far  
Would I that some reprover pointed out  
The faults in me that now are visited ;  
But, if you can, give counsel for my child.  
I think of her, and think I could not die  
And leave the problem of her life unsolved ;  
And oft my lips have formed themselves in prayer  
For her redemption through some sudden pang,  
Even of death, before my time shall come.  
I could not leave her to the world's cold care ;  
For if, as greatly to my grief she does,  
Her sister even mistrusts her, what should be

Looked for from those who know her heart still  
less ?

I know there have been cases,—there are now,—  
(How strange it seems to look for comfort, where  
Nothing but horror used of old to dwell !)  
Of women who have lived in good repute  
In spite of like divergencies ; but these  
Were much more men than women, in whose  
minds

Lived a far stronger individual sense  
Than women have or should, methinks, desire.  
This, therefore, brings no comfort ; Eucharis  
Is not of these ; except in trivial points  
Of outside manner, she was always true  
To woman's chief distinctive character ;  
And much I fear, from hints but vaguely dropped,  
That she even now is learning from herself  
The ground for such distinctions, which the more  
Leads me to add some counsel to my own.

And now farewell ; I read my letter through,  
And almost dread to send it. You will think  
I seem to countenance what the world reproves  
And justly visits; yet, if but for once,  
And if I never were sincere again,  
I must at this time, if I seek for help,  
Lay bare my thoughts to you, as if to God,  
And trust your love, as I would trust in His.  
One thing I think of; almost I resolved  
To write to him, accepting him as one  
Whose will is toward goodness, asking him  
To think of her who loves him, whom he loves ;  
To bring his knowledge of the world to bear  
Upon her future ; asking him to give,  
Even now, while not too late (her child not born,)  
Some form of outward sanction for its sake.  
But I will wait until I hear from you.

## LETTER VIII.

*ANSWER TO THE PRECEDING.*

Oct. 28, 18-2.

IF long, dear friend, in writing, think me not  
Remiss in feeling for you. I have wept  
More tears upon your letter than I thought  
I yet had left to weep. It came upon  
The moment of my going up to dress  
For one of Colonel Ford's most charming dinners ;  
And much I fear that they have taken offence  
At my unlooked-for absence, unexcused  
By message then or more than message since.  
But how could I perforce enjoy myself  
In presence of your sad and shocking news?  
I stayed at home, and had for company  
My Bible and your letter.

Yes, dear friend,  
That was my first thought ; ‘ Let me go,’ I said  
‘ As Hezekiah did, and spread it forth  
‘ Before the Lord;’ till then I could not dare  
To frame my own opinion, nor even now,  
Upon so grave a matter ; what I say  
Is not my own, though mine agrees with it.  
For, after consultation with myself,  
Guided, I doubt not, in reply to prayer,  
I came to this conclusion; ‘ I lay the case,  
‘ The names of course concealed, before some  
mind  
‘ Of strength to comprehend it.’ So next day  
I wrote to the Archdeacon, asking him  
If he would call. (I did this rather, dear,  
Because of Mrs. Hunter; no one goes  
Into that house but she finds out ere night  
‘ The utmost tittle of their business ;  
And then her tongue !) Well, in the kindest way  
He called that afternoon, and heard, concerned,

Your story as I gave it. I forbore  
To read him out the letter you enclosed ;  
I thought it might so shock him, and besides  
I gave him all the facts. He was most kind ;  
Said that it grieved him greatly, and desired,  
Next time he came, his sympathy to you,  
As being my friend, beneath so sore a trial.  
I say next time he came, for he declined  
To give his judgment quickly; such a case,  
He said, required the utmost carefulness  
In dealing with it, lest, being too severe,  
The bad grew worse ; ‘for we are taught,’ he said,  
‘On some to have compassion.’

Well, he called  
Again on Tuesday, kinder than before ;  
Shortly, I give his judgment, which is mine.  
First, he admitted that the case was one  
Which was not roughly to be generalised  
With common sins ; he thought he went within  
The boundary of God’s teaching when he said



That for your daughter, grievously deceived,  
And influenced by a villain's sly pretence,  
(For other name he said he could not give  
To him she calls her husband, nor can I;)  
There well may be some place of penitence,  
If not in this world, haply in the next.  
(At least I think he said so; though to me  
Nothing seems clearer in the Word of God  
Than the unchanging nature of that doom  
Which waits for sinners.) This point he allowed;  
But then God's ordinance must not be mocked.  
Doubtless much suffering has been spared to you  
By this part of their conduct,—calling that  
A marriage which was none; but then, dear friend,  
(I cannot but admire the faithfulness  
Of the Archdeacon to his duty here,)  
Should pain be lessened by increase of sin?  
And is not each day that your daughter lives,  
As now, beneath the shelter of a name  
Which is the Church's special right to give,

An insult to God's ordinance? Is not  
A greater sin, perhaps, committed here,  
And in continuance, than the disregard  
Of the world's social order? (This I quote  
From notes which the Archdeacon left with me  
To help my memory.) For, he goes on,  
God sees our weakness, will not judge our slips  
As if he knew not of that feebleness,  
But will most promptly visit upon men  
Deceit that backs up sinning. Thus it was  
That death to Ananias and his wife  
Came, not by reason of their love of wealth,  
But for the lie they uttered to appear  
Clean from the former fault. So oft, he says,  
The after sin is greater than the first,  
That God would seem thereby to make more clear  
The value of an early penitence.

And what does he advise? Well, here he seemed  
In some uncertainty. He said his part

Was more to point where lay most pressing need  
Of treatment, than to name the remedy;  
Physicians, as he said, think more of this,—  
To trace the true disease, than means to cure;  
And he, if he might say so, being called  
In consultation, gladly gave his views,  
But to yourself, who had the case in hand,  
The more immediate treatment must be left.  
And this I think. He thought perhaps some good  
Might be achieved by threatening her seducer,  
(Forgive me, dear, I cannot call him else)  
But not by writing as you had resolved ;  
For what would be more easy than for him  
To act consistently, and put you off  
With plausible excuses? Have we not  
Sufficient proofs of his deceitfulness?

Enclosed I send your letter back again,  
And let me say, in spite of your request,  
(I know your sweet unselfishness of old)

How much I suffer with you. Looking back  
Upon your life, it seems so hard to me  
That you should still, whose youth was made so  
sad,  
Thus grievously be chastened in your age.  
Is it not Solomon that compares a child  
Of disobedience to a serpent's tooth?  
(Solomon or Ezekiel,—I forget;)  
But how this truth must now be known to you !  
And this reminds me;—have you not been hard  
On poor dear Gertrude? Have you not (forgive  
The hint,—'tis in all kindness) been to blame  
In making more of Eucharis, who thus  
(Poor girl !) repays your great solicitude?  
And may not now some comfort flow to you  
From reconciliation with the child  
Who, like the eldest son, has stayed at home,  
And not so much as vexed you with a word  
May she not rightly feel some bitterness  
To see her duteous life rewarded so ?

For what in her has grieved you, after all,  
Is done from kindness and regard for you.  
I only put the question ; you yourself  
Will be more able to supply the answer.

And now farewell; I will not vex you more;  
You know my motives. Write again and say  
What you have done, or what you think to do.

## LETTER IX.

*EUCCHARIS TO HER MOTHER.*

San Remo : Dec. 25, 18-2.

TO-DAY is Christmas, mother, and to-day  
I mean to spend with you. Would that my eyes  
Might but behold you! Would that with my lips  
I might but bless you! Vain is the desire!—  
Northward from here we see the distant Alps,  
White shadows laid against transparent blue;  
They seem so far that they might even be  
The soul's unreachable abiding-place;—  
To me they are so; I can sit and think  
On what may lie beyond them, as one thinks  
On what may lie beyond some point of Time  
That moves up from the future,—whether life  
The same as that we know, or something else

Too strange for words ;—there lie the Alps, far off:  
But O, what number of horizons lie  
Between my lips and yours, I dare not guess!  
But if to-day aught move you to the hope  
Of better things for men than they themselves  
Can dream of yet;—if aught should wake in you  
More trust in God than even is your wont,—  
Then think that I am with you in that hope,  
And in that larger trust. I write as if  
I stood beside you, speaking ; not to-day,  
Nor yet to-morrow, nor next day, I think,  
Will you be reading this. It matters not ;  
I feel you with me daily, and to-day  
I think I almost see you in the room.

How shall I tell you, mother? In three months,  
Or thereabouts, I think, I shall have died.  
Not died as most would mean it ; there are deaths  
Social and spiritual, as well as that

Which is the failure of material force ;  
And each death brings its judgment after it,  
And resurrection also. I shall die ;  
And if you see me after, I shall be  
Another Eucharis from that you knew.  
There is a sentence haunting me,—the words  
In which that writer to the Hebrews speaks  
Of Isaac and his father ;—how he felt  
That God could even raise him from the dead,  
' Whence also he received him in a figure ;'  
So, in a figure, I shall shortly die.  
Do you remember how the dear white roads  
Cross over Thornton Common ? How from one  
You see the other nearing you, until  
They join just by the horse-pond ? So my life  
Is drawing toward another, which itself  
Draws toward mine, and in the point they meet,—  
The moment when my infant shall be born,—  
I see my death ; for ever after that  
I shall live only in another's life ;



My darling's life will be the great high-road,  
Mine but the cross-road, falling into it.  
But O, that resurrection and that day  
Of judgment after, when in that new life  
I shall behold my every sin remembered,  
My virtues, if indeed there be such things,  
Rewarded;—how I look for it, yet fear it !  
O mother, think of me this Christmas Day,  
And pray for blessings which I dare not ask.

Yet have I many blessings;—these two chief,—  
My husband and my mother. You must not  
Be vexed that I too answer what you wrote  
In confidence to him; I write myself  
To give you more assurance of his faith  
To you, to truth, and, last of all, to me.  
He was for some days cloudy, ere he saw  
That faith to you was want of faith to me,  
And that the exercise of faith to me  
Was highest faith to you. You asked him not

To show your letter to me, nor the one  
You sent enclosed; for some days he refused,  
And much I fear I taxed his quietude  
By waywardness,—but that is over now.  
Three days ago he showed me them, and said  
He could not think a matter which involved  
Our very life, should be concealed from me ;  
And he was right. My ever dearest mother,  
How kind of you to see him as he is;  
One whom a hint of injury to any  
Vexes so deeply ; one whose tenderness  
To me at all times, more than ever now,  
I had not dreamt a man could ever feel.  
As for your friend (her name you have cut off,  
But I can guess it) I could speak of her  
More strongly than politely; how dare she  
Call Leonard by such names, and that to you ?  
I could speak so ; but then, as said her friend  
The grave Archdeacon, ‘ We are taught on some  
‘ To have compassion ; ’ and, besides, I thank her

For pointing out an error into which  
We have too easily fallen.

You must know

That I have always doubted whether that  
We did was right,—to compromise our trust  
(Even for your sake, mother, which alone  
Led me to do so) by deceiving those  
Who might, and would, have cast reproach on us  
In their misunderstanding. This your friend,  
Or her friend, rather, points most clearly out,  
And you may tell them how we thank them for it;—  
We, though at present Leonard has his doubts  
Whether my strength will bear so great a strain  
As may result from full acknowledgment.  
I have not any; and I mean at once  
To take some steps to let the world be taught  
How small respect we have for its esteem,  
How great a trust in God and in ourselves.  
And this I must do quickly, for my death—  
Death in a figure—draws each day more near,

And could I face the dreadful judgment day  
After my resurrection, if this sin—  
This great black sin of looking back again,  
Of trusting God so far, yet trusting not  
In all—if this great sin should come to light  
In my new life, and make my heaven hell?  
But let me but repent it while I live  
And who can tell to what a wondrous height  
My new life may attain? O mother dear,  
Now that I stand in prospect to become  
Myself a mother, I can better read  
My own life's history; for I was born,  
So you have told me, at a time when you  
Had lost all hope of any peace on earth.  
Can I not glory in your suffering now,  
And think that through my heritage of faith  
Some yet still purer life shall bless the earth,  
Whose children yet again shall be the light  
Of many generations? This I feel,  
And think of Gertrude; it was not her fault

That she was cruel to me ; she was born  
Mid your contentment ; if you see her soon  
Give her some message from me that may be,  
Perchance, the herald of new intercourse.  
The light is failing, ere I have said half  
I wished to say, and I am weary, too.  
But in a few days I will write again ;  
O would it not (I dare not think it so)  
Be possible for you to come to me ?  
I could so comfort you.

I overlook

One portion of your letter. What, you say,  
Would be my feelings if I saw my child  
Followed through life by ignominious names ?  
What ! Shall I for myself put trust in God,  
And not commit my children unto Him ?  
It may be, by the time that they are grown,  
The love we have believed in will be held  
A thing to honour ; if not, let it be ;  
If they have no name, God will give them one.

## LETTER X.

*LEONARD TO STEPHEN.*

San Remo : Dec. 31, 18-2.

I WRITE in great perplexity; my wife  
Has partly lost her reason; you are one  
Who knows our circumstances, also one  
Who knows where best to look for help in this  
Or similar cases; to the facts you know  
Add what I send you now; lay them before  
The most approved authority; I care not  
If you consult the College of Physicians  
From one end to the other; only spare  
No effort, no expense, to send me back  
Some sound advice. There is a doctor here,  
An Englishman, and not by any means

An ordinary man; but you will see  
What makes it quite impossible to ask  
His counsel here; indeed, his own advice  
Turns in this same direction.

In three months

My wife will be a mother; this it is  
That forms the groundwork of anxiety,—  
Enough, God knows, just simply in itself.  
Three weeks ago I had a letter from  
Her mother, asking me to ponder well  
My wife's position, and her coming child's  
Before the world; this in itself was nothing;  
Both she and I know well what we have done,  
And would not, if we had to choose again,  
Do otherwise; but with this letter came  
One from a friend, sent just that I might know  
How others looked upon me ; (she herself,  
As might be looked for in a mother who  
Is loved by such a woman as my wife,  
Gives me full credit, more than I deserve,

It may be, for good motives;) this sweet friend  
Was one of those who think a bishop's hat  
The emblem of salvation; she had taken  
The counsel of another friend, a priest,—  
A sort of 'House-that-Jack-built' passing on  
From one mouth to another ; for the priest  
Has got a wife, and she, no doubt, again  
Has other wives and other priests, and so  
*Ad infinitum* ; much am I surprised  
That we have not been favoured with the thoughts  
Of the fourteenth in order ;—well, this friend  
Had been so kind as not to hurl us both,—  
Or rather, not my wife, for I was damned,—  
Into perdition for our primal fault ;  
But held out little hope of anything  
Except perdition, did we persevere  
To mock 'God's ordinance,' and hide our sin  
Beneath the shelter of those holy names  
'Which are the Church's special right to give.'  
(This passage I remember). Would you think



That dolts like these existed ? If they read,  
Without Church spectacles, the book they swear by,  
They could not talk such nonsense for an hour.  
I showed my wife these letters ; they were not  
Intended for her eyes ; perhaps I erred.  
Of course the doctrine they were meant to teach  
Was nothing to her ; (let me press on you  
The fact that, howsoe'er impossible  
The world may think it, I have cause to know  
That so far from a loss of self-respect,  
Or purity, resulting to my wife  
Through her departure from accustomed forms,  
She gains in both ; I never saw a woman  
So self-respectful, or so feminine,  
Or half so pure, not even Eucharis  
Before she was my wife.) The doctrine, then,  
This letter thought to teach concerned her not,  
But there was poison in it for her peace.  
She read it through, and then she turned to me  
With eyes all streaming ; ' It is true,' she said,

‘Thank God that I am warned of it in time !’  
I felt quite stupefied ; ‘No, no !’ she cried,  
Throwing the letter from her, ‘’tis not true  
‘That she is right and we are wholly wrong ;  
‘She is most wrong ; but have we been as right  
‘As we have boasted, Leonard ? Have we not  
‘Been satisfied with only half a faith,  
‘And is half faith a faith at all ?’ In brief,  
This was her trouble, that we had not made  
An open boast of our contumacy,  
But advertised our marriage, ‘just as if  
‘It were a common marriage,’—so she said ;  
And she insisted that we should undo,  
For God’s sake, for her own sake, most of all  
For her child’s sake, before it should be born,  
This faithless act ; for fear her child should be  
Infected with its insincerity.  
I reasoned with her calmly, and I thought  
Had soothed her conscience. For the next few  
days

She said but little, seemingly engrossed  
With thoughts I deemed it best to let alone,  
That they might work conviction to her mind.

On Friday last, however, as I came  
Back from a sketching ramble, near our door  
I met the English doctor, (we had made  
Acquaintance with him previously,) who seemed  
On the look-out for me ; and so it proved.  
My wife had sent for him, upon the plea  
Of her condition,—this is his account,—  
And, as he took his leave, she stood straight up,  
And said with lips that trembled, and a cheek  
As pale as ashes, ‘ I have sent for you  
‘ Chiefly to make beginning of a duty  
‘ I owe the world, my husband, and myself ;  
‘ I am not rightly Mrs. Arlington,  
‘ But wrongfully I have assumed the name ;  
‘ Though I am nothing shamed within myself  
‘ To be the mother of my husband’s child.’

He thought she would have fainted, but she soon  
Was repossessed, and bowed him to the door ;  
And he, with doctor's tact, put on no show  
Of wonder. This he told me, and went on  
To say that not unfrequently it chanced  
That women took such fancies near the time,  
Before or after, of their motherhood ;  
He would advise me not to be distressed,  
And not to notice it,—it would pass by.  
And this I thought to do ; but yesterday  
She asked if I would carry to the post  
Some fifty letters, all of them unstamped ;—  
She said this did not matter. On my way,  
Thinking it strange to see an envelope  
Directed to my brother, whom I knew  
She never yet had seen, I opened it,  
And found enclosed a card—a card of hers,  
The name crossed through, and, underneath, these  
words ;—

‘ I am not this, but only Eucharis,

‘ With no name else, unless God gives me one ;’  
And so with all the rest. I did not post them ;  
How could I ? But ’tis agony to me  
To see her satisfaction, to be bound  
To look a falsehood in the face of her  
With whom all previous converse has been true  
And open, even as converse with myself.  
I cannot long endure it ; then she hints  
At what she has accomplished ; I have seen  
Since yesterday a dozen times or more  
Her eyes all bright with tears,—tears which I know  
Are those of thankfulness. As yet she is  
Too much engrossed with this to notice aught  
That passes outwardly ; but she must come  
To fathom my deception ; every day  
Will grow more horrible with looking out  
For what each day brings nearer. Can it be  
That we, who long have to each other been  
As we are to ourselves, may have a thought  
We wish to keep peculiar to one mind,

And from the other keep that wish concealed ?  
It cannot be ; I know that instantly  
My mind would feel resistance, had she aught  
To keep from me, and she as certainly,  
Sooner or later, must be sensible  
Of my concealment. What will be the end  
I dare not think ; can I have done some wrong,  
And is my chastisement to flow from that  
For which I did the wrong ? Or is my love  
To suffer shipwreck for sincerity ?

Take counsel for me quickly ; I shall count  
The minutes till I see your hand again.

## LETTER XI.

*A PHYSICIAN TO HIS WIFE.*

San Remo : March 1, 18-3.

WHAT news will be most welcome to you first?  
 That I am daily stronger, and expect  
 To be in England on the day of fools,—  
 The birthday of the greatest fool of all,  
 Who thought to find a lover in a man  
 ‘Of bottles all compact?’ Shall this come first?  
 And then what next? That I have read ten times,  
 And twenty times, my son-and-heir’s epistle,  
 Walking along his pothooks like a man  
 Who threads the zigzags of a garden path?  
 And then what next? To threaten John that if  
 He overdrives the chestnut, I shall hold  
 Himself responsible? How should poor Wright,

Who, notwithstanding all his cleverness  
And hospital experience, does not know  
A cab-horse from a hunter,—how should he  
Be confident to contradict the tide  
Of plausible John's assurances? So, thus,  
My letter gets a start,—the flag has fallen;—  
But which of these three horses will come in  
First at the end, I know not ; some outsider,  
Not in the betting, may perhaps turn out  
The winner after all. ‘Why, my dear Charles,  
‘What nonsense are you talking!’ No, my dear ;  
It is not nonsense to myself ; I want  
An antidote to sadness. Laugh yourself  
Over these first two pages of my letter ;  
Then, if the end of it should make you sad,  
Write back such nonsense as I write to you ;  
The contrast will be useful.

You remember

That some two months ago, as *à propos*  
Of Mary Cheetham's case, I mentioned one



Much similar which I had met with here,  
Only before the birth, instead of after.  
You will remember, for you scolded me  
For running counter to my promises  
Of perfect rest ; well, 'tis the only case  
I have so much as thought of; and in this  
I acted rather as a friend than as  
Professionally. I am glad I did so;—  
Glad, not for any profit to myself,  
Unless it be of more humility.  
The lady whom I spoke of died last week;  
It may be that the absence of all others  
Has led my mind to rest upon this case  
More than it ever dwelt on one before ;  
Unless it be that story of the time  
When first I walked the hospitals, and saw  
The dying mother recognise her child  
In the next bed, a fever-stricken girl  
Long lost to home, and raving of such things  
As one life only could have made her know.

The lady died last week; sane or insane  
God only knows, with whom most certainly  
She rests at last. She was not, so I find,  
(And, finding so, am trebly glad that I  
Kept good discretion and concealed her name)  
She was not mad in that she charged herself  
With having wrongfully assumed the name  
Of wedded wife ; and how far mad she was  
In casting off the title, you shall judge.  
I can say nothing; conscientiousness  
Is one, they say, of God's most precious gifts ;  
Can conscientiousness be strained so far  
As to become destructive ? Is there not  
A point at which its usefulness may end,  
As is the case with almost every force  
Of mind or matter, and the abuse begin ?  
This is the problem, one of them, at least,  
Suggested to me by the case in point.

Let me trace out her history. These two

Were both romantic, as the world would say,  
To madness ; he, the husband, is a man  
Whom, if I understand him, I should wish  
To see more widely copied ; (you must trust  
My word in this ; the tale abounds in puzzles ;)  
And she was,—what she was ; the memory  
Of her death-bed is far too fresh with me  
To let me sit in judgment ; only this  
I needs must say,—that if she was not one  
Of God's most pure and sainted messengers,  
She was a deeper, bolder hypocrite  
Than ever pen depicted. Well, these two,  
Being romantic, married, to themselves,  
But not before the world, although they issued  
The usual wedding-cards, which is the point  
The whole thing turns upon. I can't make out  
Who knew the truth, if any one ; I think  
Her mother knew it, who, poor thing, arrived  
In time to see her daughter's funeral.  
They came here in the summer, so I hear,

And lived exclusively, not mixing with  
The stream of English tourists; I became  
Acquainted with them casually, and thus  
Was much surprised that she should send for me  
The day next after Christmas;—I have mentioned  
What happened then, and how I looked upon it.  
For some weeks after I was strange to them ;  
Her husband seemed to shun me. Now, it  
seems

(To write what I have subsequently learnt,)  
These cards oppressed her conscience; she became  
Not anxious, as one surely would have thought  
A woman in her station should have been,  
To clear herself, and clear her child, from shame,  
But anxious to reveal it, lest the lie,  
Descending to her child, should work it harm.  
She sent for me ; and, more than this, she wrote  
The truth upon some fifty of her cards,  
To let those know to whom the lie was told  
That she repented. Can you fathom this ?

Her husband did not post them, though to her  
He said that they were gone, and he had been  
A wiser man if he had kept her blind  
Till she was round again ; but he confessed  
The fraud some five weeks later ; whereupon  
She, always subject to excitement, fell  
Into brain-fever, in the midst of which  
Her child was born—born dead, and after which  
She died of pure exhaustion.

This is all

The outline of her story ; could I but  
Make your eyes see the scene I saw last week,  
When she was dying, you would understand  
The reason why I fill this outline in  
With colours different from those with which  
Such outlines should be filled ; should,—for I think  
That, sensitive as women mostly are  
And on the world dependent, such a fact  
As marriage without order, as a rule,  
Implies a woman void of modesty.

But in this case 'twas not so ; she was one  
Of those pure women in whose presence dwells  
Rebuke of liberty ;—I felt it so  
First time I saw her ; this, indeed, was why  
I never dreamed her self-accusing speech  
Was aught but madness. Can you fathom this ?  
I ask again ;—I cannot. Death should be  
To any woman that had wronged herself  
A terror,—I have always seen it so,—  
A terror likewise to the hypocrite ;  
Read to the end and tell me what you think.  
Her mind was clear again ; she knew quite well  
What thing had happened, and she seemed content,  
More than content, to know that she had borne  
No living child ; and once, indeed, I thought,  
Not knowing then 'twas best that she should die,  
She might get through ; I do not think she  
thought so,  
And for her husband,—I must call him so,—

His mind was like a house against itself  
Divided ; yet I think his grief is less  
Over her death than his perplexity  
Had been if she had lived. The night she died  
I thought her something brighter, and was going  
To leave him watching while I took some rest  
(Scold, if you like,—I care not) in a room  
I had called mine for several nights before.  
She was awake, and smiled, and looked at me,  
Then at her husband, as in thankfulness,  
Then turned as if to sleep; when, suddenly,  
I heard him say, ‘ Good God ! ’ and, turning  
round,

Beheld her bending forwards, with her hands  
Stretched to their farthest, striving to embrace  
Something we could not see, and all her face  
Lost in the seeing of it ;—I looked, he looked,—  
Like those who heard a voice, but saw no man ;  
A moment he supported her, and then

Her hands dropped down, and sideways drooped  
her head

Upon her husband's shoulder;—so she died.

Think over this; you cannot choose but think;  
Was this the manner of a woman's death  
Who sins against herself?



## LETTER XII.

*LEONARD TO STEPHEN.*

April 24, 18-3.

THE world is full of inequalities ;  
 Man's life is all an inequality ;  
 His joys, emotions, sins and sympathies  
 Are, like the tidal wave which is the fruit  
 Of two unequal sources of attraction,  
 Mere outward signs of inequality  
 Between his inward self and what he deems  
 His outward self should be. I know this now,  
 And felt it along ago ; I call to mind  
 A time when some one gave me a toy horse  
 Whose head was on a hinge and moved about  
 As the horse moved ; the hinge broke, and the  
     head  
 Dropped off ; I know I wept for many days

Over the headless body,—kept it safe,  
And took it out in secret to weep over,  
Knowing not wherefore ; now the cause I know;—  
It was the strange bewilderment I felt  
To find what disproportion stood between  
My joy, and that which was the outward sign  
Of all my joy,—the hinge that quickly broke,  
And in its breaking left me desolate.

O my true friend, if softly all my days  
I go henceforth,—if bitterness of soul  
Be my remaining portion, it will be  
(God knows I speak not lightly !) it will be  
The child's lament over the broken hinge.  
I have had letters,—letters meaning well,  
And not unconscious of my grievous loss,—  
But all with this one burden, either sung  
In these plain words, or plainly hinted at ;  
' Learn through your grief some lesson ; learn to  
know

‘The ways of life more clearly.’ What to learn?  
And how more clearly? I can say with Keats  
That all my knowledge is that joy is gone  
And this thing woe crept in upon my heart,  
There to abide for ever. Have they learnt,  
Who fain would have me learn, so much as this?  
I cannot answer them; but now to you,  
My truest friend in that you hold your peace  
And mock me not with little cups of grief,—  
Me, whom an ocean capable to fill  
All conduits of sorrow, circles round,—  
To you I would say something.

Verily

There have been times, there still are times, in  
which

I seem to have fulfilled the wish of those  
Who would that I learnt clearly, through my loss,  
Some lesson; yet with this great difference,—  
That they would bring me comfort, while despair,  
Clear, black, despair is all that I can reap

From what at such times is the meeting point  
Of my remembrances. ‘It better were  
‘That he should have a millstone round his neck,  
‘And drown, than tempt God’s feeble ones to sin.’  
This is my millstone; which indeed at times  
Has been, and is, and oft will be again  
More clearly felt by me than by my teachers  
Were ever seen or felt those ways of life  
Which they profess to know. O selfish wretch,  
I cry at such times, was thy charity,  
Which should bear all things, hope, believe, endure  
All things for all men,—was thy charity  
Too weak to stoop to what had been to her  
The complement of her fidelity,  
The armour for her weakness, and to thee  
A giving up of nothing? Dost thou give  
Thy body to be burned, or all thy goods  
To feed the poor? Or dost thou speak as one  
Endowed with tongues of angels, one to whom  
All mysteries are open? Yet wilt thou

Refuse thy charity, and lead in sin  
Not only her, but many after her?  
Then art thou nothing ; be condemned and die.

This is my millstone; O, a heavy one !  
I sink beneath it down, and down, and down ;  
I seem to come to where dead bodies float  
For ever in suspension; then I say,  
‘ If she has sinned through me, she should be here ;  
‘ I find her not; ’ and then a light breaks through  
From some immeasurable height, by which  
I see her, not beside me, but far off  
Where that light falls from; then I rise again,—  
Not to her level ; what that level is  
I shall not learn, save that it lies by far  
Above my own, for certain centuries ;—  
Not to her level, no ;—and yet to one  
Above that level whence I lately sank.  
And thus my one clear lesson waxes dim,  
And I am left in that perplexity

Which is far holier than the certitudes  
Of those who, seeing little, think they hold  
Within their own lives God's infinity.

So once again I am the child that weeps  
In his bewilderment, regarding not  
Their littleness who turn on him and say  
'You used your toy too roughly; bear the pain.'  
If I so used it, then God knows I bear  
Enough of penalty to satisfy  
The most severe ; but did I use my faith  
Too roughly ? Nay, in that my faith itself  
Is still unchanged, and in material guise  
I am afflicted, surely faith it was  
That proved too hard for me ; my inward self  
Moved on unheeding of the outward need  
For caution ; so did Eucharis move on,  
Only, more faithful in that she resigned  
Much more than I, her outward self was wrecked  
The sooner ; I am left to float along,

My pristine faith, thank God ! unchanged, un-  
changed,

That there is truth and firm reality

Where most men see but clouds. That we have  
failed

(If we have failed,) to reach it, matters not;

It mattered not that some were beaten back

By fear or baffling winds, from searching out

The mysteries of the western continent;

Columbus found it; so, when time is ripe,

That wind of God which for the admiral

Two months blew westward, contrary to wont,

Shall bear some on to land upon the shore

We failed to touch, if we have failed indeed.

There was not less dinned in the ears of those

Who sailed with him, of their impiety,

Than will be preached upon our history's text.

Than will be; for my mind is firmly bent

To write her memoir and to publish it,

That all may know her as she truly was.  
Nothing is lost by truth, but all things gained;  
Gain to her memory, lest, oozing out,  
The bare facts of our marriage should be made  
With some a cause for holding up of hands,  
And villainous constructions of her nature;  
Gain to the world, lest some, without the faith  
To bear her baptism, should be bold to sit  
Upon the seat which is at God's right hand.  
You would withhold me? If you would, I care  
not;

No man shall breathe upon her memory  
And hold himself by ignorance excused;  
And none shall dare to follow after her  
Save by the gate through which she entered in,—  
The gate of her own pureness, and her faith  
To see God only and to walk with Him.

But O, my friend, what inequality  
The world endures ! what inequality



Corrupts its judgment ! I have seen a man,—  
A rough, shrewd man, whose greatest virtue lay  
In carelessness of life, and hardihood  
That brought him through where other men had  
died ;—

I have seen such a man, but newly come  
From wanderings in some region where the scale  
Of man turns backward, where brute force alone  
Is held in awe, and where his force of will  
Has been a revelation ;—I have seen  
This man bowed down to, feasted, magnified,  
And all but made a saint of ; so far well,—  
Honour to whom 'tis due. But what reward  
Reserves the world for him who ventures on  
Into the future, carrying the scale  
Of human nature forward,—visiting  
Those regions yet unpeopled, save by thoughts  
Of Him who soon will give them outward forms,—  
Men, who shall move unfettered by all law  
Save that of Love, of that which brings them near

The Infinite Perfection;—does the world  
Keep praise for such a man ? Or stands it not,  
Even as the friends of Bunyan's pilgrim stood,  
To mock his setting forward ? cries it not  
'So would we have it !' when his foot has slipped,  
Or when he loses courage ?

But we know

In what we have believed ; we look behind  
And see those steps by which the whole world  
          climbs  
Up to its Father, marked each one with blood,  
With blood and tears of agony ; we know  
That what men die for, other men will rise  
To live in ; if it be that Eucharis  
Has died a martyr, as I think sometimes,—  
A martyr not for carelessness of forms,  
But carefulness to keep that always first  
Which should be first, at any sacrifice,—  
Her death will not be wasted, nor her life.  
The world is changing ; God has sent his ploughs

Into his acres ;—wars, discoveries,  
Men with keen wits, whose precious crown it is  
To bear the name of atheist,—men like steel  
Tempered to test all armour ; in due course,  
And even now, the sowers follow them;  
And when, still later, harvest time is come,  
Think you that she, whose requiem this is,  
Will not be of the sowers who rejoice  
Together with the reapers ? Answer not ;  
The answer is not yours, and is not mine.



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